ASSEMBLY CONCURRENT RESOLUTION No. 180

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

218th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED JUNE 18, 2018

Sponsored by:

Assemblywoman VALERIE VAINIERI HUTTLE
District 37 (Bergen)
Assemblywoman CLEOPATRA G. TUCKER
District 28 (Essex)
Assemblywoman YVONNE LOPEZ
District 19 (Middlesex)

Senator JOSEPH P. CRYAN District 20 (Union)

Co-Sponsored by:

Assemblywoman Jimenez, Assemblyman Schaer, Assemblywomen Lampitt, Mosquera, Murphy, Assemblyman Calabrese, Assemblywoman McKnight, Senators Greenstein and Ruiz

SYNOPSIS

Urges support for the "Keep Families Together Act.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



1	A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION urging the United States Congress to
2	support the "Keep Families Together Act" and commends the
3	efforts of U.S. Senators Menendez and Booker for sponsoring the
4	Act.
5	
6	WHEREAS, On April 6, 2018, the United States Department of Justice
7	enacted a "zero tolerance" policy under which all unauthorized
8	crossings at the Southwestern border of the United States will be
9	treated as criminal offenses, instead of civil offenses; and
10	WHEREAS, On May 7, 2018, Attorney General Jeff Sessions
11	announced that all adults who arrive at the border would be
12	prosecuted for illegal entry, even if they attempt to seek asylum:
13	and
14	WHEREAS, These federal policies separate families crossing the border
15	without authorization, since the parents are placed in criminal
16	detention centers while the children are taken into the care of the
17	U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; and
18	WHEREAS, During a May 24, 2018, Senate Judiciary Committee
19	hearing, U.S. Customs and Border Protection testified that 658
20	children were taken from 638 parents during a 14-day period in
21	May, an average of 47 children being taken from their parents each
22	day; and
23	WHEREAS, U.S. Senators Bob Menendez, the ranking member of the
24	Senate Foreign Relations Committee (SFRC), and Cory Booker
25	also a member of the SFRC, joined 30 other U.S. Senators in
26	announcing introduction of Senate Bill No. 3036, the "Keep
27	Families Together Act," to keep immigrant families together and
28	prevent the U.S. Department of Homeland Security from separating
29	children from their parents at the border; and
30	WHEREAS, The "Keep Families Together Act" was developed in
31	consultation with child welfare experts to ensure the federal
32	government is acting in the best interest of children; and
33	WHEREAS, To ensure the "Keep Families Together Act" protects the
34	welfare of children, the bill allows children to be separated from
35	their parents only in the event they are being trafficked or abused
36	by their parents and provides for an immediate review by a superior
37	upon the recommendation to separate, and only after consultation
38	with a child welfare expert; and
39	WHEREAS, This nation has a responsibility to ensure children and
40	families are able to apply for asylum, trafficking protection, and
41	other specialized forms of relief without the paralyzing fear of
42	being separated and shipped off to different facilities across the
43	country and the federal government's actions should be halted
44	now, therefore,
45	
46	BE IT RESOLVED by the General Assembly of the State of New

47 Jersey (the Senate concurring):

ACR180 VAINIERI HUTTLE, TUCKER

1. The Legislature of the State of New Jersey supports federal legislation to keep immigrant families together and prevent the United States government from separating children from their parents at the border.

2. The Legislature of the State of New Jersey urges the United States Congress to support Senate Bill No. 3036, the "Keep Families Together Act," and commends the efforts of U.S. Senators Menendez and Booker for sponsoring the legislation.

3. Copies of this resolution, as filed with the Secretary of State, shall be transmitted by the Clerk of the General Assembly and the Secretary of the Senate to the President and Vice President of the United States; the Majority and Minority Leaders of the United States Senate; the Speaker and Minority Leader of the United States House of Representatives; and every member of Congress elected from this State.

STATEMENT

This resolution commends and supports New Jersey's federal Senators Menendez and Booker for sponsoring the "Keep Families Together Act." This federal legislation keeps immigrant families together and prevents the United States government from separating children from their parents at the border.

On April 6, 2018, the Department of Justice announced a new "zero-tolerance" policy, under which all immigration violations along the Southwestern border are to be treated as criminal offenses. The result of these policies is that families who cross the border without authorization are divided. The parents are taken to criminal detention centers and the children are taken into the care of the Department of Health and Human Services.

It has been reported that the motivation for these polices is not the safety of the children, but merely to deter persons from committing immigration violations.

The American Academy of Pediatrics, the American College of Physicians, and the American Psychiatric Association, together representing more than 250,000 doctors in the United States, are requesting an immediate reversal of the "zero tolerance" policy, citing the potential for physical and emotional harm to the children.

The "Keep Families Together Act" was developed in consultation with child welfare experts to ensure the government is acting in the best interest of children. The federal legislation is currently supported by the American Academy of Pediatrics, Kids In Need of Defense, Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights of Los Angeles, Children's Law Center, and the Young Center for Immigrant Rights.